

John Birch Society Accused

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Charge That Eisenhower Is a Red Roils Congress

By Robert J. Donovan

WASHINGTON, Mar. 30.—Smoldering resentment against the John Birch Society, a semi-secret organization dedicated to fighting communism and promoting ultra-conservatism, flared in Congress today.

Renewed charges in the Senate that the society has accused former President Eisenhower of being "a card-carrying Communist" were accompanied by a demand for a Congressional investigation of its leader, Robert H. W. Welch Jr., former Massachusetts candy executive.

Meanwhile "The Washington Evening Star" quoted Rep. Edgar W. Hiestand, R., Calif., as saying that he was a member of the John Birch Society. He is the first member to be so identified, but "The Star" quoted him as having said that "I'm quite sure there are other members of Congress who are also members of the society."

After the article appeared

this afternoon it was impossible for reporters to find Rep. Hiestand. A woman in his office at the Capitol said in answer to a telephone inquiry, "I don't even know where he is. At this point he is hiding."

According to "The Star," Rep. Hiestand said that he would welcome an investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities because he was sure that an honest inquiry would squelch charges that the society is "a dictatorial, fascist organization." He said that he joined in California "quite a while back."

Tonight his press secretary, James Galbraith, said that Rep. Hiestand would hold a press conference at 10:30 a. m. tomorrow, but otherwise he refused to comment on the "Star" story.

The outcry in Congress today was begun by Sen. Thomas H. Kuchel, Calif., Senate Republic

an whip, who charged in a speech on the floor that the pronouncements of the John Birch Society (named for a United States Navy captain killed by Chinese Communist guerrillas after V-J Day in 1954) were "outrageous."

"Fantastic Libel"

In calling for an investigation of the society, the Senator inveighed against what he called the "fantastic and incredible libel" of accusing Gen. Eisenhower of being a "card-carrying Communist."

"Good God!" Sen. Kuchel exclaimed, "should the American people and the American government let that kind of spleen be poured on one who gives his whole life to the cause of freedom?"

The Senator also denounced the John Birch Society for advocating the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Upheld Warren

"Across the street," he said, "sits the Chief Justice, another good American, and the people of this society besmirch his character.... Many of us have been denounced and besmirched by some members of this organization."

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D., Conn., told the Senate that Mr. Welch had accused "not only President Eisenhower of being pro-Communist but had pinned the same label on the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the latter's brother, Allen W. Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency and Gen. Eisenhower's brother, Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower, president of Johns Hopkins University."

No Comment By Welch

A telephone call this afternoon to Mr. Welch's office in Belmont, Mass., was answered by a secretary who would identify herself only as "Miss Lett." She said that Mr. Welch was unavailable, and added: "He has no comment whatsoever."

In the House of Representatives a demand for an investigation by the Un-American Activities Committee was made by Rep. Henry B. Reuss, D., Wis. However, the committee's chairman, Rep. Francis E. Walter, D., Pa., said that it did not appear that the committee had jurisdiction. If individuals were being sued in the courts, despite the protests, therefore, there was

cerned about the increased membership and spreading influence of a relatively new organization called the John Birch Society. It has gained considerable membership in several of the major cities in North Dakota. In one city alone it has at least four cells.

'Criticisma Republicans'

"This organization is ultra-conservative... and has among its members some of the most able and influential people in each community. Strangely enough, most of its criticism is leveled not against liberal public officials, but against the more middle-of-the-road and even conservative Republicans."

"The head of this organization, Mr. Robert Welch, has made accusations against the President of the United States and other top officials far beyond anything the late Sen. Joe McCarthy ever thought of."

Defended by Rep. Rivers

On March 22 Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, D., S. C., in a speech calling Earl Warren "one of the most inept poseurs who has ever worn the robes of Chief Justice," staunchly defended the John Birch Society in the House. He included some exhibits naming members of the "council" of the society and of the "committee of indorsees."

Listed on the council were such men as Col. G. Parker, former president of the National Association of Manufacturers; Clarence Manion, former dean of Notre Dame Law School and former chairman of President Eisenhower's special committee on intergovernmental relations; Col. Lawrence E. Bunker, former aide to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur; Spruille Braden, former Ambassador to Argentina, and T. Coleman Andrews, Commissioner of Internal Revenue in the Eisenhower administration.

Members of the "committee of indorsees" were listed by states. Thus:

NEW YORK — Merwin K. Hart, Mr. Kenneth C. Crain, Frank de Gubari, E. Almsworth Eyre, Norman J. Gould, Archibald B. Roosevelt, Mrs. Seth Milliken, T. J. Parkinson Jr., Commr. Frederick G. Reinicke and George M. Tisdale.

CONNECTICUT — Philip N. Dumortier, Franklin Farrel Jr., Rev. Francis E. Fenton, A. Brooks Hawker, E. Merrill Root and E. L. Fitzgerald.

NEW JERSEY — Mrs. Frederick J. Jones, Mark H. Jones, Ross H. Jones, and J. Jones.

News" published a story about the John Birch Society, which said in part:

"Welch is a persuasive speaker. Many responsible people are attracted to the Birch Society by the lofty aims expressed by Welch and co-ordinators who lead local groups."

"It is made clear to new members that the organization is monolithic, that it operates under complete authoritative controls at all levels. And Welch is the undisputed boss."

"However, new members are not told about a book written by Welch. Its title is 'The Politician.' It is about President Eisenhower, and for 302 pages tries to prove that the President is a conscious, dedicated agent of the Communists."

"It maintains that the present Administration is controlled by the Communist party."

"In this fantastic document Milton Eisenhower is described as Ike's superior in the Communist party."